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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000282

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AF/S FOR S. HILL  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS  
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: SITUATION REPORT: ONE WEEK LATER: TSVANGIRAI CALLS  
FOR RESULTS, RECONCILIATION

REF: HARARE 278

11. (SBU) SUMMARY One week after election day, in the wake of a government crackdown on international journalists and NGO staff, opposition presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai held a press conference to reiterate his call for the Zimbabwean Electoral Commission (ZEC) to announce the official results of the presidential race. Confident that he had won, Tsvangirai focused his speech on the importance of national reconciliation and a peaceful transfer of power to the opposition. Tsvangirai confirmed that the MDC's April 5 attempt to petition the court to compel ZEC to release the results was blocked by security forces, and called on the international community to prevent violence and chaos. One American, a New York Times reporter, remains in jail. An Amcit NDI employee was released Friday night, but police are holding his passport and he has been told he will not be permitted to leave Zimbabwe before Monday. END SUMMARY

12. (SBU) On April 5, MDC presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai held a press conference to renew his call for ZEC

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to release the full official results of the presidential contest and for Robert Mugabe to respect the will of the Zimbabwean people. Confident that he has won the race for the presidency, Tsvangirai stated that "on March 29, the Zimbabwean people spoke with one voice. They voted for food, they voted for jobs, they voted for social security and new hope. The result is known; the MDC has won this election." In a veiled reference to 2005's Operation Murambatsvina, in which some 750,000 Zimbabweans were displaced by the government, Tsvangirai stated that "if Mugabe thinks he can bulldoze his way into another presidency, history will be the judge."

13. (SBU) Condemning any "reengineering" of the result by the Mugabe regime, Tsvangirai condemned the ZEC for the delay,

which had entered its seventh day. Tsvangirai confirmed that an attempt by the MDC's attorneys to file a petition at court requesting that ZEC be compelled to release the results was blocked by security forces, one of whom was wearing a ZANU-PF t-shirt at the time. Nonetheless, Tsvangirai suggested that a hearing could take place as soon as April 6.

¶4. (SBU) Tsvangirai also called on the Southern African Development Community, the African Union and the UN to prevent violence. He said that African leaders must say "no" to Mugabe. Warning that ZANU-PF was "preparing war on the Zimbabwean people, like in 2000 and 2001," Tsvangirai stated that for Mugabe "violence is the new weapon to reverse the people's will." Tsvangirai suggested that ZANU-PF's return to campaign activities, including an announcement by Mugabe's spokesman that ZANU-PF would contest in a runoff, the increased presence of security forces, and rumors of the creation of "no-go areas" for the MDC, indicated that the ruling party had "insider information" from ZEC about the outcome of the election. Tsvangirai again stated that a runoff would be "unreasonable" according to the MDC's internal tally and that he would not accept the "reversal" of the people's will. Tsvangirai said the MDC would challenge a ZEC announcement that he had not won a majority of votes. He hinted the MDC would not participate in a runoff if the environment was too hostile.

¶5. (SBU) Despite some harsh rhetoric, Tsvangirai also devoted much of his speech to calling for national reconciliation. In an attempt to calm fears of a violent handover of power, Tsvangirai addressed civil servants; including the security

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forces, war veterans and landowners. He said that none of them would face persecution, or lose jobs or property under an inclusive MDC presidency. Noting other African nations

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which have made nonviolent political transitions, Tsvangirai also made a direct appeal to Mugabe to enter into a dialogue in order to "begin the peaceful transfer of government."

¶6. (SBU) Charges against the imprisoned New York Times reporter were adjusted today: he is now accused of practicing journalism without accreditation during an election. His attorney is confident that these charges can be successfully defended, but his release does not appear imminent. The NDI employee who was released Friday night spent seven hours Saturday at Harare Central police station, hoping to recover his passport and be cleared to depart the country. Instead, he was told he will have to check in at the station Sunday morning at 9, and further consideration will be given to his case on Monday. There are no charges lodged against him. An accredited Canadian journalist was reportedly detained today after she checked in to depart the country; we believe she was later released without charge.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT: Aware that the eye of the international media is on Zimbabwe in the wake of elections, the MDC appears to be strategically employing public relations tactics to ensure attention continues. By simultaneously casting his presidency as an opportunity for reconciliation and reaching out to those actors that have historically supported Mugabe, Tsvangirai is seeking to secure either a peaceful transfer of power or, if necessary, a runoff victory. END COMMENT.

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